

HUNTER, GENERAL

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GENERALS (UNION)

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Civil War Officers Union

David Hunter

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court to carry into complete effect in said State the laws of the United States. The bill thus bringing Ohio under the authority of the laws and the Constitution of the United States, passed the Senate February 7, the House February 12, and was signed by the President February 19, 1803. This being the first act of Congress recognizing the existence of Ohio as a State, it must be taken as the virtual act of admission of the State into the Union. The two constitutional duties imposed upon Congress, under Article IV., Sections 3 and 4, of admitting new States, and of guaranteeing to them a republican form of government, were thus entered upon and performed. In the *Executive Journal* of the United States Senate for the year 1803, page 433, is this record :

I nominate Joseph Wood, of the North Western Territory, to be Register of the Land Office at Marietta in said Territory, *Vice* Peregrine Foster, resigned : and Griffith Green, of the North Western Territory to be Collector for the District of Marietta, in the North Western Territory, and Inspector of the Revenue for the same.

January 11, 1803.

TH JEFFERSON.

It is safe to say that Thomas Jefferson knew enough of the geography of his country to properly locate Marietta. The President of the United States, if any one, might be presumed to know how many States comprised the Union, and whether Ohio was then one of the number. Yet in his annual message of December 15, 1802, he makes no allusion to the admission of Ohio, and as late as January 11, 1803, he is still unaware that any such State exists. But twenty days later the President's knowledge is in conformity with the facts, for he nominates Charles Willing Byrd of Ohio, to be judge of the district of Ohio; Michael Baldwin of Ohio, to be attorney for the United States in the district of Ohio, and David Zeigler to be United States marshal. These nominations were sent to the Senate, March 1, 1803. From the collection of *Charters and Constitutions* printed by the government in 1877, it appears that the Senate had the same understanding as President Jefferson as to the date of Ohio's admission, for the act of February 19, 1803, occupies the same place filled by the formal acts admitting into the Union all other States. With such decisive proofs, it seems superfluous to argue further; and we trust this long historical controversy as to the true date of Ohio's birth as a State will be settled for all future generations.

James Q. Howard

MAJOR-GENERAL DAVID HUNTER

[PROMINENT MEN OF THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD]

Those who have been familiar, for many years past, with the faces and persons to be met or seen on Pennsylvania Avenue and other principal streets and walks in Washington, can hardly fail to have noted, since early in 1886, the absence from those scenes of one striking and interesting figure. The erect form, the quick, alert step, the bright black eye, and the eager interest taken as he passed in all the surroundings, of a gentleman of more than fourscore years, whose flowing, snow-white locks were almost his only mark of great age, were sure to command general observation. And thus the citizen, whose pleasure it was to know to whom these personal characteristics belonged, followed with interested and admiring regard, and pointed out to others who had not acquaintance with him, our venerated countryman, David Hunter, major-general of the United States Army, on the retired list. General Hunter died suddenly, February 2, 1886. Up to the last hour of his life on that day he had been abroad, taking his accustomed morning exercise, engaged in affairs, and attending to social duties. It is a comfort to the friends who survive him to remember that he thus passed away, and went without suffering to his rest at the end of a long life of usefulness and brave devotion to duty.

General Hunter was born in New Jersey, July 20, 1802, his father being a Virginian of well-known family, a chaplain in the United States Army. Of his childhood and youth there is little record remaining. The lessons of his life are to be found in his later years, and should not lightly be allowed to pass unnoticed, because it is to be hoped that always some benefit may come to his country and to the world from the example of a good, gallant, loyal, earnest man. The writer of this article enjoyed General Hunter's intimate and valued friendship only during the years since the close of the civil war; but had many opportunities for becoming familiar with his career previous to the time when his public services were a part of the history of our country.

Graduating from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1822, young Hunter was assigned to the Fifth Regiment of the United States Infantry. This regiment was sent to the Western frontier, Hunter's post, with part of the regiment, being at the Falls of St. Anthony, on the

upper Mississippi, then quite beyond the limit of civilization. The traveler who now visits the populous State of Minnesota, or the beautiful and stately cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, teeming with their scores of thousands of inhabitants, and marvelous for their enterprise, wealth, and great industries, finds it difficult to realize how remote and wild a region it was in Lieutenant Hunter's youth ; to reach it, he was compelled, in a journey which lasted three months, to traverse a wilderness beset with difficulties and dangers, suffering often from exposure, and glad to have occasional relief from fatigue by transportation in a small river-boat, or on a sledge over the snow.

In this frontier service our young officer continued eleven years ; years of activity and of hardship—of marches, of Indian fighting, and of wild adventures. But they were years which helped to develop and fix the character of the man. Such was his excellence and repute as an officer and soldier that when the first regiment of United State Dragoons was organized he was selected and commissioned as a captain in that body. It was only, however, to go into still more active and arduous service, as he and his company were called on to make long raids and expeditions into and through the Indian country, often carrying war for the protection of the advancing settlements of white men to the homes of the hostile savages. After three years of cavalry service, having in the interval married and found it necessary to give to his private and personal interests more of the care and attention which they required, and more of his time than could be consistently spared from the absorbing duties of his profession, he resigned his captaincy, in 1836, and devoted himself for six years to business engagements in civil life.

But the military habit, and the military spirit, were still in the ascendant. The sword might be turned into the plowshare, or the spear into a pruning hook, but the trained and educated soldier could not be easily tamed down into the quiet civilian. Having left the line of the regular army Hunter could not recover his place in that organization, but, his tastes and desires still turning naturally and strongly to the companionship and adventures of arms, he applied for and obtained a commission on the staff. He was restored to the army in 1842, by appointment to the office of paymaster, with the rank of major. He never quitted the service again. In this branch of the service, he proved himself in various fields a most energetic and efficient officer. He was stationed, or rather traveled, in the line of his new duty, actively, from post to post where troops were to be paid, in Arkansas and Florida, encountering often again in these regions the adventures and hardships of life in the rough to which

he had been so inured in his earlier career. But the war with Mexico came in 1846, and gave him a new experience. On the staff of General Zachary Taylor, he was selected for, and intrusted with, the very responsible position of Chief Paymaster of the Army of Occupation. Throughout the war, and in its brief but brilliant and successful campaigns, he acquitted himself with an intelligence and capacity which sustained the reputation he had acquired, and it was well understood in army circles that it was at Hunter's suggestion the ground was selected on which the battle of Buena Vista was fought. After the Mexican war he was engaged in a round of successive duties at various posts in the West, and on the frontier, until the whole country was startled and shocked by the distracting and ominous approach of our civil war. Then it was that men's very souls were tried, and that new, crucial, and most searching tests of courage and patriotism were needed, and had to be applied. Major Hunter was then on duty at Fort Leavenworth. The intenseness of his loyalty, his devotion to the Union, and his abhorrence of every treasonable purpose and project for the overthrow of constitutional government were well known. But it was, alas! a time when, even among officers of the army, allegiance to the flag was in many instances undermined and wavering. He had, however, no sentiment for nor sympathy with secession. After the election of Mr. Lincoln the temper of those who were infected by the growing spirit of disloyalty began to manifest itself more openly. Many proofs were given of an existing design to conspire against and prevent a peaceful inauguration of the incoming President. Conspirators in the interest of a mad and excited South were known to be contemplating an obstruction of the journey of Mr. Lincoln to the capital; and angry threats were made, that if, to that end, assassination by the way were necessary, he should not reach Washington alive. Major Hunter was alive to the danger indicated by these revelations. He communicated his knowledge of these evil intentions to the President elect; and steps were taken to guard his passage on the road from his home in Illinois to the seat of government, and to secure his safe and orderly induction into the high office for which he had been constitutionally chosen by the people.

Major Hunter was invited by Mr. Lincoln to accompany him to Washington. After the inauguration he was assigned, by order of General Scott, to the charge and protection of the President's house and person. During a period of six weeks, at this exciting and critical time, he remained day and night at his post in the discharge of this delicate and responsible duty, having under his command to aid him a body composed of a hundred gentlemen from various States of the Union, who enrolled

themselves as volunteers for this patriotic service. But then, with the cloud of civil war bursting into active hostilities, came the need of call to every patriot and to every man who looked with veneration up to the old flag, to take the place for which he might be in any degree qualified, and in which he might best prove his devotion to the Union. Hunter was appointed on the 14th of May, 1861, colonel of the Sixth Cavalry, a newly organized regiment of the regular army. Soon after, as volunteer troops in answer to the call of the President began to arrive at Washington, he was assigned to the command of a brigade stationed on the Virginia side of the Potomac. Relieved from this command, in which he was succeeded by Colonel (now General) W. T. Sherman, he was placed at the head of the right division of the army assembling under General McDowell, to advance southward against the Confederate enemy gathered in force in the direction of Manassas. Early in the battle of Bull Run, while encouraging and leading in person the advance of his division, in the heat of the fight, he was severely wounded in the neck and compelled to quit the field, the command of the division thereupon devolving on Colonel Andrew Porter, of his first brigade. The gallantry and energy of Hunter displayed at Bull Run, and his proven and acknowledged military merit and capacity led to speedy promotion. He was appointed successively brigadier-general of volunteers, to take rank from May 17, 1861, and a major-general of volunteers, to date from August 13, 1861.

As soon as he had so far recovered from his wounds as to be fit for duty he was ordered to report to General Fremont, then commanding the Western Military Department, with headquarters at St. Louis, and was assigned to the command of the First Division of Fremont's army, moved with it in the advance on Springfield, Missouri, and at that point, on the 2d of November, 1861, by direction and under instruction of the President, relieved General Fremont, and assumed the command of that department and army. It was at this juncture that General Hunter received, direct from the President himself, one of those autograph letters of advice which Mr. Lincoln was accustomed to send to his generals in the field—letters which, while they evince the watchful care and observation with which he followed every movement of the Union forces at the front, at the same time, in their clear, terse, unpretending and often quaint style, were wonderful models alike of his modesty and his sagacity. An old officer, who was himself of marked professional education and experience, once was led to remark that a most interesting and valuable collection of these letters, with proper annotation, might be made and published under the title of "Lincoln as a Military Man." In a report of his services fur-

nished by General Hunter shortly before his death, in answer to a call from the War Department, is found a full copy of this letter, as follows:

Washington, Oct. 24, 1861.

Sir: The command of the Department of the West having devolved upon you, I propose to offer you a few suggestions, knowing how hazardous it is to bind down a distant commander in the field to specific lines and operations, as so much always depends on a knowledge of localities and passing events. It is intended, therefore, to leave a considerable margin for the exercise of your judgment and discretion.

The main rebel army (Price's) west of the Mississippi is believed to have passed Dade County, in full retreat upon Northwestern Arkansas, leaving Missouri almost freed from the enemy, excepting in the southeast of the State. Assuming this basis of facts, it seems desirable, as you are not likely to overtake Price, and are in danger of making too long a line from your own base of supplies and reinforcements, that you should give up the pursuit, halt your marching army, divide it into two corps of observation, one occupying Sedalia, and the other Rolla, the present termini of railroads; then recruit the condition of both corps by re-establishing and improving their discipline and instruction, perfecting their clothing and equipments, and providing less uncomfortable quarters. Of course, both railroads must be guarded and kept open, judiciously employing just as much force as is necessary for this. From these two points, Sedalia and Rolla, and especially in judicious co-operation with Lane on the Kansas border, it would be so easy to concentrate and repel any army of the enemy returning on Missouri from the Southwest, that it is not probable any such attempt to return will be made before or during the approaching cold weather. Before Spring, the people of Missouri will be in no favorable mood to renew, for the next year, the troubles which have so much afflicted and impoverished them during this.

If you adopt this line of policy, and if, as I anticipate, you will see no enemy in great force approaching, you will have a surplus of force, which you can withdraw from these points and direct to others, as may be needed, the railroads furnishing ready means for reinforcing these main points if occasion requires.

Doubtless local uprisings, for a time, will continue to occur; but these can be met by detachments and local forces of our own, and will, ere long, tire out of themselves.

While, as stated in the beginning of this letter, a large discretion must be, and is, left to yourself, I feel sure that an indefinite pursuit of Price, or an attempt by this long and circuitous route to reach Memphis, will be exhaustive beyond endurance, and will end in the loss of the whole force engaged in it.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

General Hunter, giving this letter, as he said, "to show the soundness of Mr. Lincoln's judgment even in military affairs," added, "the idea of chasing Price into the wilds of Western Arkansas, and thus putting the army entirely out of position, and preventing operations on the lower Mississippi during the winter, was so absurd that I should not have thought of it for a moment, even if I had not had the good advice of Mr. Lincoln."

But Hunter's command of the Western Department was of short duration. He was relieved on the 9th of November, 1861, by order of General McClellan, and transferred to the command of the Department of Kansas. General Halleck was sent to succeed him in Missouri. The exact reason for this change was never made quite clear; but it seemed to have been occasioned by apprehension in the mind of McClellan that some jealousy or dissatisfaction had grown out of the superseding of Fremont. The short winter spent by Hunter in Kansas was uneventful, but not passed idly. Having no force of the enemy to encounter or look after within his own Department, he busied himself effectively in the organization of troops, and in furnishing valuable assistance to the commanders in Missouri and New Mexico. He was prompt in answering their appeals to him for help, and did not hesitate or wait, but assumed at once in every emergency, the responsibility of any such service. Among the proofs of his energy and patriotism in this direction may be cited the following letter from General Halleck:

St. Louis, Feb. 19, 1862.

MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER,
Department of Kansas :

To you, more than any other man in this Department, are we indebted for our success at Fort Donelson. In my strait for troops to reinforce Gen. Grant, I appealed to you. You nobly and generously placed your forces at my disposition. This enabled us to win the victory. Receive my most heartfelt thanks.

H. W. HALLECK, *Major-General.*

General Hunter also, without instruction, and on his own judgment of the emergency, sent a regiment of mounted Colorado volunteers, by forced marches, to reach and aid General Canby in New Mexico. This regiment was commanded by General John P. Slough; and it was their brilliant victory over the enemy at Cañon Glorietta which saved the territory to the Union. But it was not the policy of the government at Washington to keep an officer of Hunter's experience and energy where his time must be passed in comparative inaction. He was ordered to relieve General Thomas W. Sherman, and, as his successor, assumed the command of the Department of the South on the 31st of March, 1862. His first effective service there was the bombardment and reduction of Fort Pulaski. The Department of the South at that time consisted of the territory embraced in the States of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. It was more than a field for military watchfulness and military enterprise. It was a region occupied by a community in which were to be met and faced and disposed of questions of burning and exciting character, requiring to be handled

with peculiar tact and unflinching boldness. Should the slaves of rebels in arms be turned into a force to be used against their insurgent masters? Should freedom be declared for those held in bondage, as against those who could claim to be their owners only by virtue of local laws and constitutional protection, which they themselves had violated and defied? Were men bound in unnatural thralldom to be restored to their natural right of liberty as a justifiable means for bringing those who profited by this enforced service to a due sense of their obligation of allegiance? Were the rebels to be left to the advantage of being supported and supplied, while fighting at the front, by the uninterrupted labor of their negroes behind them? Above all, might not the enslaved race be enlisted and organized into a force to be used as a legitimate weapon of warfare to compel the rebellious masters to submit to duty and the law? General Hunter was, in his convictions on these points, in advance even of general Northern sentiment, and in advance of the national government. And his courage was always equal to his conscientious convictions. He issued, in succession, two orders—one proclaiming freedom to the slaves within his department; the other providing for the embodiment of these freedmen into a regiment to be employed on the Union side in the war. The government at Washington, if not the country, was as yet unprepared for these decided and radical measures. The President repudiated and disavowed any authority given to a military commander to make such proclamation of emancipation; but in reality no announcement to that effect was transmitted to General Hunter, nor any direct expression of disapprobation of his action. He seems to have simply been the brave exponent of ideas and wishes timidly entertained at headquarters. It is thus that the single-hearted and enthusiastic leader in a great movement or popular cause often anticipates and helps to show the way to the grand end for which others, moving up slowly and hesitatingly, get afterward the principal credit. The true, daring man strikes while others are waiting for rule and precedent. As to the policy of employing negro troops, the former slaves of Confederates, General Hunter urged that upon the attention of the government from the time of his taking command in the South, "not only," to use his own language, "as adding to the number and efficiency of our own forces, but chiefly on account of its depriving the enemy of just so much labor in the fields, and compelling them to send an equal number of white men to do the necessary cultivation." But in this, as in the great work of emancipation, the authorities were not yet up to the time. Public opinion, or rather public cowardice, paralyzed conscience. And it is a sad fact that Hunter's negro regiment raised in South Carolina,

although reported by him "a great success," learning and practicing well the drills and duties of the soldier, was never recognized nor paid. It was neither rejected nor accepted as a part of the military force. But the President himself did not fail, before many months had passed, to express his appreciation of the value of such troops and the importance of employing them. On the 1st of April, 1863, he addressed to General Hunter this autograph letter :

" Private."

*Executive Mansion, Washington,
April 1, 1863.*

Major-General Hunter :

" My dear Sir : I am glad to see the accounts of your colored force at Jacksonville, Florida. I see the enemy is driving at them fiercely, as is to be expected. It is important to the enemy that such force shall not take shape and grow and thrive in the South ; and in precisely the same proportion it is important to us that it shall. Hence the utmost caution and vigilance is necessary on our part. The enemy will make extra efforts to destroy them, and we should do the same to preserve and increase them.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

But Hunter's fearless action and treatment of this difficult problem was not passed unnoticed by those who condemned the course which he deemed it his plain duty to pursue. In Congress Mr. Wickliffe, from Kentucky, called attention to what he regarded as a heinous offense in a military commander, denounced the employment of the negroes as soldiers, and procured the passage of a resolution of inquiry on the subject. This inquiry, addressed to the government, was referred by the Secretary of War to Hunter, for answer and explanation, and elicited from him immediately a report in reply. This report was so characteristic of the bold, good man who made it, and at the same time so clear and conclusive, that it deserves to be transcribed and preserved among the most important historical documents of our civil war.

*Headquarters, Department of the South,
Hilton Head, S. C., June, 1862.*

To the HON. E. M. STANTON,

Secretary of War, Washington, D. C.

Sir : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of a communication from the adjutant-general of the Army, dated June 13, 1862, requesting me to furnish you with the information necessary to answer certain resolutions introduced in the House of Representatives, June 9, 1862, on motion of the Hon. Mr. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, their substances being to inquire :

1. Whether I had organized, or was organizing, a regiment of fugitive slaves in this Department?

2. Whether any authority had been given to me from the War Department for such organization ; and,

3. Whether I had been furnished, by order of the War Department, with clothing, uniforms, arms, equipments, and so forth, for such a force ?

Only having received the letter at a late hour this evening, I urge forward my answer in time for the steamer sailing to-morrow morning—this haste preventing me from entering as minutely as I could wish upon many points of detail, such as the paramount importance of the subject would seem to call for. But in view of the near termination of the present session of Congress, and the widespread interest which must have been awakened by Mr. Wickliffe's resolutions, I prefer sending even this imperfect answer to waiting the period necessary for the collection of fuller and more comprehensive data.

To the first question, therefore I reply : that no regiment of fugitive slaves has been or is being organized in this Department. There is, however, a fine regiment of loyal persons whose late masters are fugitive rebels—men who everywhere fly before the appearance of the national flag, leaving their loyal and unhappy servants behind them to shift, as best they can, for themselves. So far, indeed, are the loyal persons composing this regiment from seeking to evade the presence of their late owners, that they are now, one and all, endeavoring with commendable zeal to acquire the drill and discipline requisite to place them in a position to go in full and effective pursuit of their fugacious and traitorous proprietors.

To the second question, I have the honor to answer that the instructions given to Brig-Gen. T. W. Sherman by the Hon. Simon Cameron, late Secretary of War, and turned over to me, by succession, for my guidance, do distinctly authorize me to employ all loyal persons offering their services in defense of the Union, and for the suppression of this rebellion, in any manner I may see fit, or that circumstances may call for. There is no restriction as to the character or color of the persons to be employed, or the nature of the employments—whether civil or military—in which their services may be used. I conclude, therefore, that I have been authorized to enlist fugitive slaves as soldiers, could any such fugitives be found in this Department. No such characters, however, have yet appeared within view of my most advanced pickets—the loyal negroes everywhere remaining on the plantation to welcome us, aid us, and supply us with food, labor, and information. It is the masters who have in every instance been the fugitives, running away from loyal slaves as well as loyal soldiers ; and these, as yet, we have only partially been able to see—chiefly their heads over ramparts, or dodging behind trees, rifle in hand in the extreme distance. In the absence of any 'Fugitive Master Law,' the deserted slaves would be wholly without remedy had not the crime of treason given the right to pursue, capture, and bring back those persons of whose benignant protection they have been thus suddenly and cruelly bereft.

To the third interrogatory, it is my painful duty to reply that I have never received any specific authority for issues of clothing, uniforms, arms, equipments, and so forth, to the troops in question—my general instructions from Mr. Cameron, to employ them in any manner I might find necessary, and the military exigencies of the Department and the country, being my only, but I trust sufficient, justification. Neither have I had any specific authority for supplying these persons with shovels, spades, and pickaxes, when employing them as laborers ; nor with boats and oars when using them as lighter-men ; but these are not points included in Mr. Wickliffe's resolution. To me it seemed that liberty to employ men in any particular capacity implied and carried with it liberty, also, to sup-

ply them with the necessary tools ; and, acting upon this faith, I have clothed, equipped, and armed the only loyal regiment yet raised in South Carolina, Georgia, or Florida. I must say, in vindication of my conduct, that had it not been for many other diversified and imperative claims upon my time and attention, a much more satisfactory result might have been achieved ; and that in place of only one regiment, as at present, at least five or six well drilled, brave and thoroughly acclimated regiments should by this time have been added to the Loyal forces of the Union.

The experiment of arming the blacks, so far as I have made it, has been a complete and marvelous success. They are sober, docile, attentive, and enthusiastic—displaying great natural capacities in acquiring the duties of the soldier. They are now eager beyond all things to take the field and be led into action ; and it is a unanimous opinion of the officers who have had charge of them, that, in the peculiarities of this climate and country, they will prove invaluable auxiliaries—fully equal to the simular regiments so long and successfully used by the British authorities in the West India Islands.

In conclusion, I would say, it is my hope there appearing no possibility of other reinforcements—owing to the exigencies of the campaign in the Peninsula—to have organized by the end of next fall, and be able to present to the Government, from forty-eight to fifty thousand of these hardy and devoted soldiers. Trusting that this letter may be made part of your answer to Mr. Wickliffe resolution, I have the honor to be most respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

(signed)

DAVID HUNTER,
Major-General Commanding.

This report, brave and frank, but full of stinging irony, being communicated to Congress, its effect on the public mind, as reflected in that body, was at once apparent. An act was passed authorizing the raising of fifty thousand negro troops, as the beginning of an open and avowed policy in this particular in the conduct of the war. But in the South, too, as well as in the North, this use of the negro force, inaugurated by General Hunter, attracted to that officer an enviable notoriety. The virulence of feeling engendered in the Confederate Government at Richmond, exploded in the following remarkable document :

*War Department, Adjutant and Inspector-General's Office,
Richmond August 21, 1862.*

GENERAL ORDERS—No. 60.

Whereas, Major-General Hunter, recently in command of the enemy's forces on the coast of South Carolina, and Brigadier-General Phelps, a military commander of the enemy in the State of Louisiana, have organized and armed negro slaves for military service against their masters, citizens of this Confederacy. And Whereas, the Government of the United States has refused to answer an enquiry whether said conduct of its officers meets its sanction, and has thus left this Government no other means of repressing said crimes and outrages than the adoption of such measures of retaliation as shall serve to prevent their repetition, *Ordered* that Major-General Hunter and Brigadier-General Phelps be no longer held and treated as public enemies of the Confederate States, but as

outlaws ; and in the event of the capture of either of them, or that of any other officer employed in drilling and organizing slaves, with a view to their armed service in this war, he shall not be regarded as a prisoner of War, but held in close confinement for execution as a felon, at such time and place as the President shall order.

*By order, S. COOPER,
Adjutant and Inspector-General.*

This shameful Confederate proclamation, while it gave evidence of the frantic alarm which caused its issue, was unattended by any practical results. It was never withdrawn ; and until the end of his life General Hunter could proudly refer to it as unintended proof, furnished by the enemy, of his military sagacity as well as his love of freedom. But that enemy was not known, except perhaps in a single instance, to have attempted its enforcement. The government of the United States allowed the insulting edict to go unnoticed, but General Hunter himself has left on record a very interesting account of the effective measures he took to protect those of his own command. "One of my officers," he wrote, "had been taken prisoner near St. Augustine, Florida, and thrown into the common jail in Charleston. He informed me by an open letter, sent by a Confederate flag of truce, that he was to be sent back to Florida to be tried by the civil courts on a charge of exciting an insurrection of the negroes. I immediately notified the Confederate authorities that I would at once seize and place in close confinement all citizens of any influence within my lines, and would immediately execute three of their number for every one of my officers injured. In a few days I received another open letter from this office, saying that he had been released from confinement, was treated most kindly by the people of Charleston, and was on the first opportunity to be sent North for exchange."

General Hunter, commanding the army in co-operation with the naval force under Rear Admiral Du Pont, during the operations against Fort Sumter and the city of Charleston in the spring of 1863, gave to the President and to the Secretary of War, full and detailed reports of the situation and movements in that quarter. These are narratives of much historical interest, but too voluminous to be reproduced here. They are to be found recorded and embodied in part in the printed *Report of Military Services*, furnished by him in compliance with an order from the War Department in 1873. The views and plans of General Hunter always looked to the most vigorous and active use of the forces at his command. But he was not always seconded in his desires for such energetic movements. His course was criticised. But, as usual, the severest of his critics were some of those whose knowledge of military operations was acquired

by catering for the public press, at a distance from the seat of war, and generally in blessed ignorance of the situation. He never, however, failed to have the full confidence of the President ; and when, in June, 1863, he was relieved from the command of the Department of the South, Mr. Lincoln wrote to him in terms of the strongest assurance : "The change was made for no reasons which convey any imputation upon your known energy, efficiency, and patriotism."

Smarting under information from the President himself that the editor of the *New York Tribune* was largely instrumental in procuring this change of commanders in that quarter, the sensitive old veteran may be pardoned for the sarcasm of this letter sent to that eminent journalist :

PORT ROYAL, SOUTH CAROLINA,
JUNE 12, 1863.

H. Greeley, Esq., New York.

Sir : Since you have undertaken the attack on Charleston, I sincerely hope you will be more successful than in your first advance on Richmond, in which you wasted much ink, and other men shed some blood. It is clear, from your paper, that you knew nothing of the orders which bound me to a particular course of action, which orders I strictly followed, and for obeying which I am censured. Worse than any wound our enemies can inflict, are the stabs in the dark of personal friends. The country must be informed that you have charge of this second attack on Charleston, so that on you may rest the praise or censure.

Very respectfully

Your most obedient servant

D. HUNTER.

Mr. Greeley, it is believed, made no answer ; and Fort Sumter and Charleston were not taken.

General Hunter, ever awake to the direction and exigencies of the occasion, appears to have had advanced views on other points relating to the conduct of the war. While holding command in the South, he repeatedly urged the President and the Secretary of War to consider the advantage that might come from sending an expedition through the interior of the Confederate States. He begged to be placed in command of such an expedition. He proposed to land a force at Brunswick, in Georgia, and march through that State, Alabama and Mississippi to New Orleans. After he was retired from the command at Charleston, he still dwelt on the importance of a movement through the heart of the Confederacy ; and writing, in August, 1863, from Louisville, Kentucky, strongly and enthusiastically to Mr. Stanton on the subject, he said :

There are now crowded into the States of Alabama and Georgia over two millions of negroes, furnishing four hundred thousand fighting men, all ready, willing and anxious to

be drafted, and making much better soldiers than most of the men who require six and seven hundred dollars to induce them to '*volunteer*.' Twenty, fifteen or even ten thousand men marched rapidly into these States, without baggage, without artillery, subsisting on the country, carrying arms and ammunition for the negroes, and officers enough for one hundred thousand men, could go without serious opposition, directly from Vicksburg to Charleston.

I think you will find that this small force can now well be spared, and I am confident it could march from the Mississippi to the Atlantic without serious opposition. A general rebellion among these crowded negroes would certainly produce great demoralization throughout the rebel army. The corn crop is very abundant, and if we can get nothing else we can live on the corn. We certainly should be able to do whatever the rebels can. The negroes would know every path, as they make most of their visits in the night, and we should thus be able to march just as well at night as in the day. I beg you will telegraph me to this place authority to take charge of an expedition of this kind.

There is every reason to believe that if the government at Washington had, at that time, approved and authorized the execution of Hunter's project, it could have been carried out with complete success, breaking into and through the hollow crust of the Confederacy, and carrying dismay and defeat from the valley of the Mississippi to the Atlantic coast. Under greater difficulties than would then have probably been encountered, at a later period in the war, the "march to the sea" was accomplished by another great and brilliant leader, but the credit of the idea remains with Hunter none the less, as one of the proofs of his military forecast and sagacity.

In the autumn of 1863, and through the succeeding winter, General Hunter was busily and actively occupied in the duty of inspecting and reporting on the condition of all the troops in the Mississippi valley under the command of General Grant, and the troops with General Banks on Red River. But, advancing as he was in age, the field, the march, the bivouac, the stirring adventures of the old-time cavalry officer, were more to the taste of Hunter, and in May, 1864, he was gratified to be ordered to command the Department of Western Virginia. It was not a service in which one of his habits could be idle. His rule in that Department was distinguished by the daring raid which, with a force of about eighteen thousand men of all arms, he organized and led up the Shenandoah Valley, and back westward over the Blue Ridge, occupying Lexington, destroying the important works for the construction of ordnance for the Confederacy at Buchanan, and, by "an audacious movement," to use the language of Jefferson Davis, reaching "the very walls of Lynchburg." This expedition was a means of inflicting much injury on the enemy, and inspiring in them no little terror. Until its management and results were better understood,

however, and during the subsequent threatening approach of the enemy on Washington, and the attending popular excitement, this campaign was severely criticised. Without other comment now on such fault-finding, it is sufficient to cite what was promptly written by General Grant, on the 14th of July, 1864, to the Acting Secretary of War:

I am sorry to see such a disposition to condemn a brave old soldier, as General Hunter is known to be, without a hearing. He is known to have advanced into the enemy's country, towards their main army, inflicted a much greater damage upon them than they have inflicted upon us with double his force, and moving directly away from our main army. . . . I fail to see yet that General Hunter has not acted with great promptness and great success. Even the enemy give him great credit for courage, and congratulate themselves that he will give them a chance of getting even with him.

In August, 1864, General Hunter was, at his own request, relieved from the command in Western Virginia. This was the last of his field service. The war closed in the spring of 1865. But, to mark the appreciation of this veteran officer by his government, he was honored by brevet promotions, successively, as a brigadier-general in the United States Army on the 15th of March, 1865, "for gallant and meritorious service at the battle of Piedmont, and during the campaign in the Valley of Virginia," and as a major-general in the United States Army, of the same date, "for gallant and meritorious services during the Rebellion."

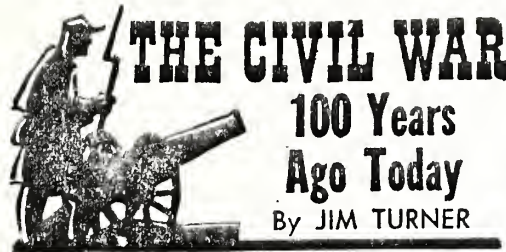
The high consideration in which General Hunter was held led to his being frequently detailed to serve on important army boards and courts-martial. Among the most noted instances of his being called to such service, he was in 1862, while in command of the Department of the South, ordered to preside over the court for the trial of General Fitz John Porter; and in 1865 he was president of the military commission for the trial of the assassins of President Lincoln. Such trusts were but the due recognition of his intelligence, his integrity, and his honor.

This completes the outline account of the public career of Hunter. It is a simple narrative, drawn from authentic records—a brief sketch of events and services, compiled by the hand of a loving friend who is unwilling to think of one of the remarkable men who figured in our great struggle for the preservation of the National Union being forgotten. And yet the writer hopes only to attract the notice, and refresh the memory, for a moment, of a new generation, who are enjoying the blessings which were fought for and secured by the energy and wisdom of those who are lately dead or fast disappearing. In regard to men who have held official position and done great public service, the people are like one who stands looking at a passing procession. The spectator gives no heed to those

who have gone by ; but his attention is wholly occupied with the movement of those immediately in front of him ; unless occasionally when he cranes his neck to get sight of the faces, and speculate on the appearance of such as are marching in that portion of the line which has not yet come up. But in the case of General Hunter, the heart of friendship is not satisfied with recalling and dwelling only on his merits and performances as a man in public life. In his private, personal, and social character and relations, he was so true, good and lovable, that no one who knew him could speak of him in cold or measured terms. "The noblest of all noble fellows—both gentle and fierce," was what the gallant Rear-Admiral Raymond Rodgers said in describing him to General Halpine—the "Miles O'Reilly" of war literature. And no juster, truer picture could be drawn than that which came from the pen of Halpine himself, who served long on Hunter's staff in close and confidential daily intercourse with him : "In my whole experience of human nature—and it has been exceedingly varied—the purest, gentlest, bravest and most honest gentleman I have ever had the means of knowing thoroughly, is the officer in question. . . . David Hunter lives in my memory, and must while memory lasts, as a character free from any vice, so incapable of any baseness, that I have often thought four years of life not wasted if only for making me by that experience to realize that such a manhood as his was yet possible in this soiled and dusty world."

In closing this article, a word may properly be added, concerning an incident of recent occurrence. The present Congress of the United States, being in session at the time of General Hunter's death, promptly passed through both Houses, without objection, a bill bestowing on the venerable and estimable widow the usual monthly pension, accorded by special act to the widow of an officer of his rank. It is a strange and painful fact that the President of the United States surprised and shocked the general sense of justice and propriety by withholding his assent to that bill. The reason assigned for this departure from a generous usage was purely technical. But that reason was, at the same time, a blunder both as to the law and the practice. It is charitable to believe, as was stated in his place, by a distinguished senator from New Hampshire, that this action of the Chief Executive may be imputed to ignorance, and not a worse motive ; and it is reasonable to hope that before the Forty-ninth Congress ceases to exist the error will be corrected.

Robt. C. Schenck



Lincoln Upholds Gen. Hunter

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 10, 1862—President Lincoln today personally entered the squabble between Maj. Gen. David Hunter and Brig. Gen. James H. Lane regarding who will command the Union expedition into Arkansas from Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.

As the feud broke into the open, Lincoln ruled: "My wish has been and is to avail the Government of the services of both Gen. Hunter and Gen. Lane, and, as far as possible, to personally oblige both. Gen. Hunter is the senior officer and must command when they serve together; though insofar as he can, consistent with the public service and his own honor, oblige Gen. Lane, he also will oblige me. If they cannot come to an amicable understanding, Gen. Lane must report to Gen. Hunter for duty, according to the rules, or decline the service."

